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Native Americans fret as report card released on 2020 census

By FELICIA FONSECA and MIKE SCHNEIDER
Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Plans for the 2020 census were set well in advance to ensure Native Americans living on reservations were counted more accurately than during the 2010 census, when almost 5% of the population was missed. COVID-19, politics and an ever-changing deadline that cut the decennial count short weren't in those plans. Instead of canvassing neighborhoods and setting up at huge events like the Gathering of Nations in New Mexico, advocates turned to phone

banking, dropped off promotional material at entrances to tribal lands that were closed to visitors and tried to entice people to fill out the census with sacks of flour and potatoes at roadside stands. Despite a well-financed campaign, Native Americans expect those living on about 300 reservations across the U.S. to be undercounted again. They'll find out Thursday just how good a job the Census Bureau believes it did in counting every U.S. resident during the 2020 census when the statistical agency releases two reports assessing the national count based on



In this Aug. 26, 2020 photo, a sign promoting Native American participation in the U.S. census is displayed as Selena Rides Horse enters information into her phone on behalf of a member of the Crow Indian Tribe in Lodge Grass, Mont.

race, Hispanic origin, sex and age. "At the end of the day when you have your whole religious calendar that has been discontinued, when

you are looking at 'How do I support this huge health risk in my community,' it really wasn't at the forefront of everyone's minds," said Ahtza Chavez, executive

director of NAVA Education Project, which led the New Mexico Native Census Coalition.

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Native Americans fret as report card released on 2020 census



Activists hold signs promoting Native American participation in the U.S. census in front of a mural of Crow Tribe historian and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Joe Medicine Crow on the Crow Indian Reservation in Lodge Grass, Mont., on Aug. 26, 2020.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

The 2020 census figures showed there are now 9.7 million people who are American Indian and Alaska Native either alone or in combination with another race — a significant increase from the 5.2 million in 2010.

The numbers don't line up with tribes' own enrollment figures, in part because the census allows people to self-identify. Tribes have stricter criteria for enrollment that can include calculating one's percentage of ancestry or tracing lineage to a list of names.

Still, evidence that people were missed can be startlingly obvious. For example, census data showed the Havasupai Tribe in northern Arizona had no one who self-responded to the census.

The tribe's chairman, Thomas Siyuja Sr., said that's impossible because he knows people who filled out the census online and by mail

and encouraged others to do the same. He said some tribal members might have been reluctant to open the doors for a census taker who went door to door in Supai Village, deep in a gorge off the Grand Canyon.

"It is uncertain how our census count is zero because obviously we as a tribe do exist, and we do have tribal members and other residents who live in Supai," Siyuja said Tuesday. Up until the 20th century, Native Americans weren't regularly counted in the once-a-decade census. They first were counted on reservations and in the general population in 1900, decades before the U.S. considered them citizens.

More recent changes allow Native Americans, Alaska Natives and other Indigenous peoples to write in their ties to specific tribes or communities.

The numbers matter because they are used to distribute \$1.5 trillion in federal

funding each year and to determine congressional representation. Montana gained a congressional seat after the latest census, but Arizona fell short of the numbers needed to add one.

The tribal self-response rate among Arizona tribes, not including the Navajo Nation, was less than 27%. Tribes in Montana and the Dakotas didn't fare much better. Washington state had the highest self-response rate for tribes at around 60%.

Even before Thursday's results are released, tribal leaders worried the coronavirus pandemic would contribute to an undercount.

Tribes across the country shut down their reservations, making follow-up interviews with unresponsive households almost impossible for door-knocking census takers and forcing advocates to get creative. In New Mexico, tribal advocates campaigned on so-

cial media, the radio and through videos produced in eight Indigenous languages. They passed out coloring books with census messaging, deployed Wi-Fi hot spots to help communities struggling with internet access and printed flyers to let people know head start centers, health care and housing are funded through census data, Chavez said.

"We went above and beyond, like miracle workers," she said.

The Klamath Tribes, based in Chiloquin, Oregon, did raffles and drive-thru dinner events to help people fill out the census and drew attention in a video to inaccurate figures for tribal housing in the 2010 census. Tribal Councilwoman Willa Powless said the data showed 38 homes on the tribe's land, but the tribe had more than 80.

"That really motivated people to want to participate," she said. "It was a shock for tribal members to see how

severely undercounted we were."

During the last census in 2010, there was a 4.8% net undercount of Native American and Alaskan Natives living on reservations, the highest of any race. Black people were undercounted by more than 2%, Hispanics were undercounted by 1.5%, and Asians were undercounted by 0.08%. Non-Hispanic whites were overcounted by 0.8%.

Chavez thinks the undercount will be higher for Native Americans this time around. While a handful of pueblos saw high self-response rates because of previous investments in broadband, others didn't, she said.

Many tribal lands were still closed when census field operations ended in mid-October 2020. By then plans had already gotten complicated.

The Census Bureau initially planned for up to 1,000 census takers to spread out across the Navajo Nation — the largest Native American reservation in the U.S., spanning 27,000 square miles (69,000 square kilometers) in Utah, New Mexico and Arizona. It ended up with less than 300 at the peak, said James Tucker, an attorney with the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights who chairs a Census Bureau advisory committee.

North Dakota state Rep. Marvin Nelson, whose district includes the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa reservation, is worried about a severe undercount in his district since census operations were interrupted by the pandemic. He said his county was pegged at having 12,000 residents in the 2020 census, while federal numbers put the tribal population alone at 17,500 people.

"The way the census was conducted was really problematic," Nelson said last week. "Almost no one got a census mailing, and then due to COVID, there was no home-to-home" door-knocking by census takers. □

Lawsuit seeks to stop group's door-to-door voter fraud hunt

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI

Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — A coalition of civil and voting rights organizations invoked the 19th-century Ku Klux Klan Act in a lawsuit filed Wednesday seeking to stop a group of Donald Trump supporters from going door-to-door in Colorado in a search for already-debunked voter fraud.

The suit against the U.S. Election Integrity Plan alleges that the group's activities include photographing voters' homes and "door-to-door voter intimidation" in areas where a high number of minorities live. The group was founded after Trump lost the 2020 election to Democrat Joe Biden and made false claims of mass voter fraud.

Shawn Smith, a retired Air Force colonel who runs the group, did not immediately respond to a request for comment sent to Cause for America, a separate "election integrity" group he runs. USEIP has no listed phone number or email. The lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado on behalf of the state chapter of the NAACP, the League of Women Voters and Mi Familia Vota.

The move represents a high-profile push against a new method that election deniers have used to try to advance claims of voter fraud



Supporters cheer as President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally, Feb. 20, 2020, in Colorado Springs, Colo.

that have been roundly dismissed. Repeated audits and investigations — including by Trump's own Department of Justice — found no significant fraud in the 2020 election, and Trump backers lost more than 50 lawsuits trying to overturn the vote. The lawsuit relies in part on the KKK Act, which was passed after the Civil War to prevent white vigilantes from using violence and terror to stop Black people from voting. The law has recently been cited in a lawsuit over the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection. Rep. Bennie Thompson, a Mississippi Democrat, ac-

cused Trump of conspiring with far-right extremist groups that were involved in storming the U.S. Capitol. The civil and voting rights groups allege that USEIP members sometimes carry firearms and badges during visits to voters' homes, even though they do not work for the government. It cites no specific examples. "They're sending a very clear message that if you vote in the future in Colorado, you can expect an armed agent showing up at your door," said Courtney Hostetler, an attorney on the suit.

USEIP thanks Mike Lindell,

the chief executive of MyPillow and a major supporter of election deniers, in its organizing manual. Smith attended a meeting that Lindell organized on election conspiracy theories last August along with Tina Peters, a clerk in Colorado's western Mesa County who was indicted by a grand jury Wednesday for her role in copying confidential election data that appeared on conspiracy websites after the event.

The Colorado secretary of state's office says Smith was on the telephone with a clerk in a second county as he made copies of infor-

mation from his own election system and gave it to two people not authorized to view it. Last month, at a gathering of election conspiracy theorists, during a discussion of Colorado's Democratic secretary of state, Smith said, "If you're involved in election fraud, then you deserve to hang." In late November, Lindell hired Smith to run Cause of America. In an interview on former Trump adviser Steve Bannon's podcast, Smith said the new organization would "help coordinate the election integrity efforts of citizens across the country."

Lindell did not immediately respond to a request for comment Wednesday.

The lawsuit alleges that the U.S. Election Integrity Plan targets high-density housing that often is full of minority voters who are more likely to vote Democratic.

"Sometimes armed and donning badges to present an appearance of government officiality, USEIP agents interrogate voters about their addresses, whether they participated in the 2020 election, and — if so — how they cast their vote," the lawsuit said. "It is reported that multiple agents have claimed to be from 'the county,' and have, without any evidence, falsely accused the residents of casting fraudulent ballots." □



This photo provided by Jared Touchin shows Navajo Nation health director Jill Jim, left, Navajo-area Indian Health Service director Roselyn Tso and Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez in Albuquerque, N.M., on July 29, 2019.

Associated Press

By FELICIA FONSECA Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — President Joe Biden an-

nounced Wednesday he is nominating veteran health administrator Roselyn Tso to oversee the federal agen-

Indian Health Service head nominated amid tough challenges

cy that delivers health care to more than 2.5 million Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

Tso, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, most recently served as director of the agency's Navajo region, which stretches across parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. She began her career with the Indian Health Service in 1984 and held various roles in the agency's Portland, Oregon, area and at its headquarters in Maryland, the White House said.

Navajo Nation President

Jonathan Nez said Tso is "exceptionally qualified" to lead the agency and pointed specifically to her work during the coronavirus pandemic, when the Navajo Nation had one of the highest per capita infection rates in the U.S. "Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, her leadership, expertise and compassion have helped to reduce the spread of this modern-day monster and save lives," Nez said in a statement.

Tso's nomination is subject to confirmation from the U.S. Senate. She holds a

bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from Marylhurst University in Oregon and a master's degree in organizational management from the University of Phoenix.

The Indian Health Service repeatedly has been the focus of congressional hearings and scathing government reports that seek reform. The agency runs two dozen hospitals and about 90 other health care facilities around the country, most of which are small and on or near Native American reservations. □

SPLC report: Hate groups in decline as views hit mainstream

By **AARON MORRISON**
Associated Press

The number of white nationalist, neo-Nazi and anti-government extremist groups across the U.S. fell for a third straight year in 2021, even as some groups were reinvigorated by the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol last year and by the ongoing culture wars over the pandemic and school curriculums.

In its annual report, released Wednesday, the Southern Poverty Law Center said it identified 733 active hate groups in 2021, down from the 838 counted in 2020 and the 940 counted in 2019. Hate groups had risen to a historic high of 1,021 in 2018, said the law center, which tracks racism, xenophobia and far right militias. The number of anti-government groups fell to 488 in 2021, down from 566 in 2020 and 576 in 2019. Such groups peaked at 1,360 in 2012, the year former President Barack Obama was elected to a second term. "Rather than demonstrating a decline in the power of the far right, the dropping numbers of organized hate and anti-government groups suggest that the extremist ideas that mobilize them now operate



White nationalist demonstrators walk into Lee park surrounded by counter demonstrators in Charlottesville, Va., Saturday, Aug. 12, 2017.

Associated Press

more openly in the political mainstream," says the new report, shared with The Associated Press ahead of its release.

The Montgomery, Alabama-based law center cited several examples including Fox News' Tucker Carlson, whose discussion of a conspiracy likening immigration from nonwhite countries to a "great replacement" of white Americans last September was welcomed by white nation-

alists who were linked to the "Stop the Steal" rally that preceded the Jan. 6 Capitol attack. The law center counted 98 active white nationalist groups in 2021. The report's release comes one day after a federal jury convicted a Texas man of storming the Capitol with a holstered handgun, in an attempt to obstruct Congress' joint session to certify the Electoral College vote that cemented President Joe Biden's victory over

former President Donald Trump. Separately on Tuesday, Henry "Enrique" Tarrío, a longtime leader of the far-right Proud Boys extremist group, was arrested on a conspiracy charge related to his alleged role in coordinating the Capitol attack. Active Proud Boys chapters jumped to 72 in 2021, up from 43 in 2020. The rise in chapters was noteworthy considering that more than three dozen members of the group had been

charged in relation to their role in the Capitol attack, according to the law center.

"After Jan. 6, in the immediate aftermath, these groups did lay low," Susan Corke, SPLC's Intelligence Project director, told the AP. "I had a moment of hope that was quickly extinguished when I didn't see more mainstream Republicans condemn these groups."

The extremist ideas expressed by active hate and anti-government groups "are increasingly normalized," Corke added.

Beyond the Capitol attack, the law center's report details how several factions of the far right movement have been reinvigorated by political wedge issues. Issues fueling active hate and anti-government extremist groups include the banning of critical race theory and books that discuss LGBTQ identity in public schools, coronavirus vaccine and mask mandates, and immigration.

"This movement is working feverishly to undermine democracy, but what's more startling is that they are also coalescing around a willingness to engage in violence," Corke said. □



An adult and young manatee swim together in a canal, Feb. 16, 2022, in Coral Gables, Fla.

Associated Press

By **CURT ANDERSON**
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — More than 55 tons of lettuce have been fed to starving Florida manatees as part of an experimental program to help the slow-moving marine mammals since their natural food is

being destroyed by water pollution, wildlife officials said Wednesday.

The lettuce, funded by more than 1,000 individual donations, is offered to manatees that gather in the warm water discharge near a power plant on Florida's east coast as they

55 tons of lettuce fed to Florida's starving manatees

typically do during cold months.

Officials from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said in a conference call that the feeding program has made a difference.

"That's a substantial amount," said Ron Mezich, feeding program coordinator for the Florida wildlife commission. "We're not done yet."

The unprecedented feeding response came after a record 1,100 manatees died last year, largely because of starvation.

The problem requires a long-term solution because pollution from agriculture, septic tanks, urban runoff

and other sources is killing the seagrass on which the marine mammals rely.

Through Feb. 25 this year, about 375 confirmed manatee deaths have been recorded.

That compares to 389 during the same period last year; both are far above the 136 deaths reported in 2020 during the first two months.

More than 80 rescued manatees are currently being cared for at facilities in Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico and Ohio, according to Terri Calleson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Some of those are abandoned calves that typically take longer to recover. Florida legislators last year pro-

vided \$8 million for several seagrass restoration projects that will get off the ground this year, officials said. But it won't be an immediate solution.

"We're not solving the seagrass issue in a year," said Tom Reinert of the Florida wildlife commission.

There are currently about 7,500 manatees, also known as sea cows, living in Florida waters.

They are listed federally as a threatened species, although there are efforts to give them the heightened endangered designation.

The approach of warmer weather means manatees will disperse to areas where food is more plentiful, officials said. □

Europe faces pressure to join U.S., British ban on Russian oil

By RAF CASERT, KELVIN CHAN and DANICA KIRKA
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Europe faces a tough choice: Is it worth a recession to choke off oil and gas money to Russia while it fights a war in Ukraine?

While U.S. and British bans on Russian oil increase the pressure on Europe to follow suit, the continent's dependence on Russia for energy makes an immediate embargo much more difficult. Still, some officials say it is the only way to stop pouring billions in oil and gas revenue into President Vladimir Putin's coffers, despite the near certainty of record inflation worsening.

Europe gets around 40% of its natural gas and 25% of its oil from Russia, whereas the U.S. gets meager amounts of oil and no natural gas. An EU boycott would mean higher prices at the pump and on utility bills, and ultimately the threat of an energy crisis and recession while the economy is still recovering from the coronavirus pandemic.

Prices for everything from food to electricity are already painfully high partly because of skyrocketing natural gas prices in Europe.

Governments have rolled out subsidies to compensate people for high utility bills, while gasoline has risen above 2.01 euros per liter — the equivalent of \$8.33 per gallon, meaning filling up a



A winding tower of a closed coal mine rusts in front of a coal-fired power station Gelsenkirchen, Germany, Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

compact car could cost 90 euros (\$98).

Those costs already are cutting into consumer spending, with inflation at all-time high of 5.8%. The question is: How much more pain can Europeans take to try to stop Putin's attack on Ukraine?

"The consequences to the European economy would be major," said Simone Tagliapietra, an energy policy expert at the Bruegel think tank in Brussels. "And therefore, there would need to be an upfront, clear, political decision that we are willing to compromise our economy, we are willing to afford a recession, in order to hit Pu-

tin where it hurts."

U.S. President Joe Biden acknowledged as much when he announced the U.S. ban on Russian oil imports, saying "many of our European allies and partners will not be able to join us."

Efforts to agree on a boycott could be complicated because some EU member countries are much more dependent than others on Russia. Germany and Italy rely heavily on Russian natural gas. Poland gets 67% of its oil from Russia, while Ireland gets only 5%.

"It will be divisive within Europe because one part of Europe risks suffering more," said David Elmes,

head of the Global Energy Research Group at the University of Warwick's business school. "So it's going to put the European political system and the European project ... under an awful lot of stress."

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, announced a plan Tuesday to wean the bloc off two-thirds of Russian natural gas by the end of the year, including by purchasing more liquefied natural gas brought by ship and building up renewables more quickly.

That already will be a massive challenge to accomplish, Netherlands Prime

Minister Mark Rutte said, because "we are very much dependent, that's the sad reality."

The EU goal "is a huge task to get there. I'm not sure we can get that, but we have to do everything in our power to make that happen," he said Wednesday.

With the world already facing an energy crunch and oil prices soaring to \$120 per barrel — compared with \$76 at the end of last year — a European boycott would send prices and inflation "to the moon," said Tagliapietra from the Bruegel think tank. And not just for Europe, but energy-consuming countries around the world.

Yet the intensification of the conflict, the stream of refugees and the heart-rending images of suffering are keeping the issue very much on the table.

There is "considerable pressure both from allies as well as domestically — the public would probably back this sort of a move as long as it didn't mean too high prices," Caroline Bain, chief commodities economist at Capital Economics said in an online briefing Tuesday. Bain expected European countries to take a "more measured approach" rather than a complete ban on Russian energy and "look at ways in which they can reduce considerably their reliance on Russian energy." □

Associated Press

South Korea returns North Korean boat, 7 crew members

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea's military on Wednesday returned a North Korean boat and its seven crew members across the countries' disputed western sea boundary a day after they drifted into waters near a South Korean border island. South Korea's navy fired warning shots on Tuesday to chase away a North Korean patrol vessel that temporarily crossed the so-called Northern Limit Line

while pursuing the boat near Baekryeong island. The seven crew members told South Korean military officials they drifted south of the boundary because of navigation mistakes and mechanical problems and expressed a desire to return to North Korea, South Korea's Defense Ministry said. South Korea's navy has often fired warning shots to repel North Korean vessels crossing the countries'

poorly marked sea border, but there also have been some deadly clashes over the years. South Korea blamed North Korea for an attack on a South Korean warship that killed 46 sailors in 2010, but the North has denied responsibility. South Korea has patrolled waters around the Northern Limit Line for decades after it was drawn up by the U.N. command at the end of the 1950-53 Korean



South Korean Navy's patrol ships search for survivors from the sunken South Korean navy ship near South Korea's Baekryeong island, March 29, 2010.

Associated Press

War. North Korea does not recognize the line and insists upon a boundary that encroaches deeply into waters currently controlled by the South. □

Israel, Turkey vow to heal rift despite sharp differences

By **BURHAN OZBILICI** and **SUZAN FRASER**
Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey and Israel agreed on Wednesday to rebuild their relationship despite their differences, as Israel's President Isaac Herzog became the first Israeli leader to visit Turkey in 14 years.

Appearing before cameras following talks with Herzog, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan described Israeli president's visit as "historic" and "a turning point" in Turkish-Israeli relations. He said Turkey was ready to cooperate with Israel in the energy sector, adding that the Turkish foreign and energy ministers would soon visit Israel for more talks on increased cooperation.

"Our common goal is to revitalize political dialogue between our countries based on common interests and respect for mutual sensitivities," Erdogan said. Herzog said his visit constitutes a "very important moment" in relations, allowing the countries to "build bridges essential to us all." Both leaders conceded however, that differences remain — not least on the issue of the Palestinians.

"We expressed the importance we attach to reducing tensions in the region and preserving the vision of a two-state solution," Erdo-



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, right, shows the way to Israel's President Isaac Herzog pose during a welcome ceremony, in Ankara, Turkey, Wednesday, March 9, 2022.

Associated Press

gan said. "I underlined the importance we attach to the historical status of Jerusalem and the preservation of the religious identity and sanctity of Masjid Aqsa," the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem's historic Old City. Israel captured east Jerusalem with its Jewish, Christian and Muslim holy sites — the emotional ground zero of the more than century-long conflict — in the 1967 Mideast war and annexed it in a move unrecognized by most of the international community. The Palestinians seek east Jerusalem as capital of a future state

along with the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Israelis and Palestinians have not held substantive peace negotiations to reach a two-state solution to the conflict in over a decade.

Herzog said: "We must agree in advance that we will not agree on everything, that is the nature of relations with a past as rich as ours."

"But the disagreements we will aspire to resolve with mutual respect and openness, through the proper mechanisms and systems, with a view to a shared fu-

ture," he said.

Turkey and Israel once were close allies, but the relationship frayed under Erdogan, who is an outspoken critic of Israel's policies toward the Palestinians. Israel also has been angered by Erdogan's embrace of Hamas, the militant group that controls the Gaza Strip. Israel considers Hamas a terrorist group.

The countries withdrew their respective ambassadors in 2010 after Israeli forces stormed a Gaza-bound flotilla carrying humanitarian aid for Palestinians that broke an Israeli blockade.

The incident resulted in the deaths of nine Turkish activists. Relations broke down again in 2018 when Turkey, angered by the U.S. moving its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, once more recalled its ambassador, prompting Israel to respond in kind. The two countries have not reappointed their ambassadors.

The steps toward a rapprochement with Israel come as Turkey, beset by economic troubles, has been trying to end its international isolation by normalizing ties with several countries in the Mideast, including Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Earlier, Herzog arrived at the Turkish presidential palace in the capital, Ankara, escorted by a Turkish mounted color guard. Erdogan and a military honor guard greeted him as a band played the Israeli anthem for the first time since 2008.

Herzog arrived on a plane emblazoned with the words "peace," "future" and "partnership" in Hebrew, Turkish and English.

In Istanbul, a group of about 150 people, mostly members of pro-Islamist groups, protested Herzog's visit, chanting anti-Israeli slogans and holding banners calling the Israeli president a "killer." □



In this photo provided by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency Public Information Office (PDEA PIO), a man arranges bags of seized suspected methamphetamine in Valenzuela city, Philippines Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Philippine authorities seized suspected methamphetamine estimated to be worth more than 1 billion pesos (\$19.6 million) at

a home in the capital region Tuesday and arrested a Chinese suspect, as the president's crackdown on illegal drugs pressed on in his final months in power.

Philippine authorities seize largest drug haul this year

Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency chief Wilkins Villanueva said about 160 kilograms (352 pounds) of the suspected stimulant, locally called shabu, was discovered in the house in Valenzuela city in metropolitan Manila after the arrest of the Chinese suspect and his Filipina companion by law enforcers who pretended to be drug buyers. If the seized substance, some packed in tea bags, turns out to be methamphetamine, it would be the largest illegal drug haul so far this year. Tuesday's raid was the latest in a series of

antidrug operations across the country this month that have led to the arrest of 11 suspects and the confiscation of a large amount of methamphetamine, Villanueva said.

About a week ago, police and anti-drug agents seized 60 kilograms (132 pounds) of methamphetamine with an estimated street value of more than 400 million pesos (\$7.8 million) in a raid in Marilao town in Bulacan province near Valenzuela city, police said. "We told you to stop but you're just so hard-headed," Villanueva said

at a news conference Tuesday night, addressing drug dealers. "We'll get to all of you, just wait."

President Rodrigo Duterte launched a deadly crackdown on illegal drugs at the start of his six-year term in 2016. The campaign has led to the arrest of thousands of mostly petty suspects and the killing of more than 6,200 others in mostly police-enforced operations that have alarmed Western governments and human rights groups. The killings have sparked an investigation by the International Criminal Court. □

Guatemala increases abortion penalty, bans same-sex marriage

By SONIA PÉREZ D.

Associated Press

GUATEMALA CITY (AP)

— Guatemalan lawmakers have increased prison sentences for women who have abortions, bucking a recent trend in Latin America toward expanding access to the procedures.

As some of Latin America's largest countries — Mexico, Argentina, Colombia — have expanded abortion access in the past two years, there remain countries where conservative religious trends continue to hold sway.

Late Tuesday — International Women's Day — Guatemala's Congress passed a "Protection of Life and Family" law that also targeted the LGBTQ community. On Wednesday, which Guatemala's Congress declared "Life and Family Day," President Alejandro Giammattei said in a speech at the National Palace, "This event is an invitation to unite as Guatemalans to protect life from conception until natural death."

Guatemalan women convicted of terminating their pregnancies can now face sentences up to 10 years that before were a maximum of three. The Con-



Women participate in a demonstration marking International Women's Day in downtown Guatemala City, Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

gress imposed even heavier penalties for doctors and others who assist women in ending pregnancies.

Abortions are legal only when the life of the mother is at risk.

Lawmakers backing the legislation said the law was necessary because "minority groups in society propose ways of thinking and practices that are incongruous with Christian morality."

Lawmaker Vicenta Geróni-

mo, who voted against the legislation, said it violates human rights, especially of women in rural areas where there isn't a government health infrastructure. The legislation passed with 101 votes in favor and 8 against. Fifty-one lawmakers were not present.

Jordan Rodas, Guatemala's elected human rights prosecutor, said Guatemala was regressing by limiting women's rights at a time the world was expanding

them. He added that those supporting sexual diversity are not seeking privileges, "but want to live free of stigma and discrimination." "The approval of this dangerous initiative represents a threat to the rights of women and LGBT people in the country," said Cristian González of Human Rights Watch. He also said the legislation served as a distraction from President Giammattei's systematic dismantling of the justice

Associated Press

system. Opposition lawmaker Samuel Pérez said it was approved by men unaffected by the issue of abortion.

Colombia expanded access to abortion last month when the Constitutional Court voted to legalize the procedure until the 24th week of pregnancy. Prior to the ruling, Colombia allowed abortions only when a woman's life was in danger, a fetus had malformations or the pregnancy resulted from rape.

In September, Mexico's Supreme Court ruled that abortion was not a crime, that it was unconstitutional to punish abortion.

And in January of last year, a law went into effect in Argentina allowing elective abortion up to the 14th week of pregnancy and beyond that in cases involving rape or risk to the woman's health. It was all the more significant because Pope Francis hails from Argentina.

The Guatemala legislation also explicitly prohibited same-sex marriage — which was already effectively illegal — and banned schools from teaching anything that could "deviate (a child's) identity according to their birth gender." □

Puerto Rico scraps debt restructuring deal for power company

By DÁNICA COTO

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— Puerto Rico's governor on Tuesday announced that his administration was cancelling a proposed debt restructuring deal for the island's public power company, calling it unfeasible.

The deal had been in the works for several years and was delayed by the pandemic, with many expecting it might have been approved soon since Puerto Rico's government is starting to emerge from bankruptcy after declaring in 2015 that it was unable to pay its more than \$70 billion public debt load.

The island's Electric Power

Authority holds more than \$9 billion of that debt, the largest of any government agency, and economists consider restructuring that debt key for the island's economic progress.

Gov. Pedro Pierluisi said that the current proposed deal is neither feasible nor in Puerto Rico's best interest. "I am committed to achieving (the company's) exit from bankruptcy," he said, adding that he supports a deal that would ensure an efficient, cleaner and reliable electric energy system for the island.

A federal control board that oversees Puerto Rico's finances and the ongoing bankruptcy-like process in federal court said it sup-

ported Pierluisi's decision. However, it noted that the plan would have cut the power company's debt by 32% and that legislators whose approval was needed "unfortunately rejected some of the key terms...as unacceptable."

Both the board and the governor's office said worldwide economic conditions — including rising inflation and surging prices of oil — have changed significantly since the agreement was negotiated with creditors in 2019.

On Monday, the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis criticized the plan, saying "it ignores Puerto Rico's financial vulnerability and puts the fu-



Roberto Figueroa Caballero sits on a small table in his home that was destroyed by Hurricane Maria in La Perla neighborhood on the coast of San Juan, Puerto Rico, on Oct. 5, 2017.

Associated Press

ture of its energy grid at risk."

Tom Sanzillo, director of financial analysis for the Ohio-based nonprofit, said the deal would have imposed a "significant rate increase" while repaying bondholders for \$8.2 billion of legacy debt.

He said that by imposing new debt service to pay off old debt, the deal would have canceled any benefit from the \$12 billion Puerto Rico is slated to receive from the U.S. federal government to rebuild its power grid following Hurricane Maria. □

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Shopping

The Paseo Herencia stores offer a great collection in beach wear, clothing, perfume, shoes, jewelry,



souvenirs and much more. Pamper yourself by visiting Maggy's and enjoy their salon services and shop for your favorite beauty products. Aruba Aloe has that perfect gift to bring back home, all made with natural ingredients. Other brand favorites are Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Aldo, Carmen Steffens, Nike store, Pandora and many more.

Restaurants

Start with a breakfast meal at Paseo Herencia offering unique breakfast options such as Drunk's Denial with their Make it Your Own Crêpe Bar offering sweet and savory crêpe flavors and the option to booze it up with their Mimosa crêpe (mandarin soaked in champagne), Pina Colada (pineapples in coconut rum), Bourbon Apple, Brandy Apricot, Whiskey Pear and more. Location can be found by following the bakery smell upon arrival. Another option is Sibarita with their Latin inspired breakfast plates such as Huevos Rancheros, Cafetero Breakfast, Empanadas and more surrounded by a cozy

picnic setting. Go Argentinian style at Che Bar and try their delicious omelet with chorizo/ham, mozzarella, onions, peppers, and tomatoes served with skillet potatoes and toast. Looking for a complete breakfast? Visit TGI Fridays and go for the crispy bacon or sausage, eggs your way and fluffy pancakes and toasts for only \$9.99, available all day – every day including unlimited coffee refills.

These restaurants are also open for lunch & dinner offering you a variety of cuisine choices. If you're looking for more unique concepts, join us for dinner at Xixon Restaurant greatly known in Miami for their Spanish inspired dishes with top notch flavors and the largest wine variety or visit The Lazy Turtle and try their exotic African dish "Kuvuta Kuku" accompanied by their tasty lazy cocktails. Coming for drinks? Sip and have a good time at the Bulldog Aruba located in the center of the Plaza. Open till late.

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Cinemas VIP on the second floor of Paseo Herencia and enjoy your favorite movies in the most comfortable reclining seats with high quality screens with the latest projection and 7.1 Dolby surround sound and not to forget their delicious buttery bag of popcorn.

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Catch live shows from Monday to Thursday and Sunday at 8pm on the Paseo center stage and the nightly water shows at 7:30pm, 8:30pm and 9:30pm. Looking for some adrenaline? Visit the Airsoft experience located behind The Lazy Turtle. Snap Instagramable pictures at the Angel Wings located between Pandora and Free Spirit or the Flying mosaic hearts located behind King Churros. Parking up to two hours is free when shopping, dining or catching a movie at Paseo Herencia. Just present your purchase receipt at our parking cashier.

To learn more about our specials and events, visit the Paseo Herencia website www.paseoherencia.com.



Honoring of Emerald Ambassadors at Divi Phoenix Aruba



EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates.

These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination.

The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees are: Dennis and Vickie Carol from Michigan who have been honored as Distinguished Visitors of Aruba.

They have been honored as Distinguished Visitors.

The couple loves coming to the island for it's beautiful weather, friendly people and variety of restaurants.

Heyliger together with the representatives of Bucuti and Tara Resorts presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □

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Let us fight against colon cancer

ORANJESTAD – March is celebrated as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

In connection with the awareness month, the Minister of Public Health, Dangui Oduber, wants to inform and raise awareness in the community about colorectal cancer. It is part of the government's prevention policy, as indicated in the national plan to prevent NCDs (Noncommunicable diseases). Various stakeholders and with the PAHO are part of this plan.

Around the world, colorectal cancer is one of the most common types of cancer. It is in the top 5

most frequently diagnosed cancers in Aruba. Colorectal cancer starts in the pancreas, which is located behind the stomach and is part of the digestive system. The awareness month theme is #letsbeatcoloncancer "let's fight against colorectal cancer".

The direct cause of colorectal cancer is still unclear. However, there are various ways with which you could minimize the risks.

Control your feces regularly for any signs of colorectal cancer. If you notice blood, slime, or any irregularity, it is advisable to consult your family physician. It

is also important to tell your family physician about your family's history with colorectal cancer if there is one.

Some factors that can increase the risk of getting colorectal cancer are: Tobacco use; Obesity; Diabetes; Chronic Colorectal Disease (inflammation); Frequent exposure to certain chemical fumes.

The risk of getting diagnosed with colorectal cancer increases with age. Research indicates that the majority of colorectal cancer diagnosed are in men. The cause may be the



higher tobacco consumption by men compared to women.

Prevention is essential. A well-balanced lifestyle and nutrition are key elements in prevention.

In March, the government will emphasize proper nutrition to prevent chronic diseases. Eat more vegeta-

bles, fruits and drink plenty of water to help your digestive system.

The Minister encourages the community to exercise, eat healthily and help others live healthier lives. A healthy lifestyle helps prevent chronic diseases and many cancers, including colorectal cancers.

Participation of women in the workforce of Aruba



ORANJESTAD - The ILO celebrated this year's International Women's Day by advocating for large-scale investments in a package of care leave and services that benefit workers, children, families, businesses, societies, and the planet.

Worldwide, women are in charge of family care and household chores. This kind of care is without pay and nowadays is getting more

recognized.

The Department of Labor and Investigation (DAO) shares the message of ILO and presents some recent statistics about the position of women in the Aruban labor market:

Women comprise 51.4% of the workforce at the end of 2021. In 2019 it was 51.9%.

Approximately 49% of women worked for more than 5 years for the same

employer.

The majority of female workers (28%) work in the hospitality sector, commerce, wholesale and retail, and car repair (15%) The number of families receiving welfare comprises 60% women at the end of 2020. This amount increased in 2019 by 20%.

Unemployment under women increased from 6.2% in 2019 to 8.0% in 2020.

The participation rate of women in the workforce decreased from 58.7% in 2019 to 50.2% in 2020.

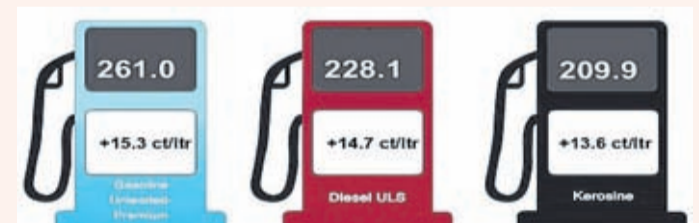
The number of inactive women increases from 2019 to 2020 by 30%. This is approximately 5500 persons.

The percentage of working women 15 years and older decreased from 55.7% in 2019 to 46.2% in 2020.

DAO congratulated all women on their day for their extraordinary achievements and contributions to Aruba's economy.

Positivism and determination will help us recover from any trying time and continue to prosper. DAO will continue with its efforts to protect and optimize the position of women in the labor market of Aruba.

New prices for petroleum products starting March 9th



Oranjestad - As of yesterday, the 9th of March, the price for petroleum products in Aruba changed.

The Minister of Economic Affairs, Communications and Sustainable Development announced that the prices for petroleum products were adjusted, and would come into effect starting March 9th of 2022.

The price for gasoline unleaded-premium will see an increase of 15,3 cents, making the total price 261,0 cents per litre. Gasoil LS will see an increase of 14,7 cents which will bring the total price to 228 cents per litre and Kerosene will see an increase of 13,6 cents which brings the price to 209,9 cents per litre.

Turnover tax (BBO), Health tax (BAZV) and BAVP are included in the prices.

'HODL': A typo takes hold as a sound cryptocurrency strategy

By **ANDY ROSEN**
of NerdWallet

Late in 2013, with bitcoin prices in the middle of a steep dip, a post appeared in an online forum featuring a misspelling that would become legendary: "I AM HODLING."

The mangling of the word "hold" captured a kind of irreverent blind faith of some early cryptocurrency adopters, and it has since become a part of the lexicon of digital assets.

But "HODL" is more than just a meme. According to financial planners and analysts, it's also a rational response to a market whose ups and downs are exceedingly difficult to predict.

"The holding part of it is important because it's a nascent industry, and as a retail investor you are not well-equipped to be able to capture the volatility and to trade the assets," says Theresa Morrison, a certified financial planner in Tucson, Arizona.

Indeed, the original HODLER in 2013 had no illusions about their ability to play the market. But the post conveyed a confidence that time would improve bitcoin's fortunes.

"WHY AM I HOLDING? I'LL TELL YOU WHY," their message read (this time spelling "hold" correctly). "It's because I'm a bad trader and I KNOW I'M A BAD



An advertisement of Bitcoin, one of the cryptocurrencies, is displayed on a building in Hong Kong, on Nov. 18, 2021.

TRADER."

A TIME-TESTED STRATEGY, WITH LIMITATIONS

The utility of HODLing, like any investment strategy, has its limits. Even a long-term cryptocurrency investor would be well-served to articulate clear goals and to monitor the emerging space for systemic risks.

But in general, the idea of investing for long-term, rather than short-term, gains is not a new one. One time-tested guideline for investing in the stock market is to put money in only if you're willing to keep it there for the foreseeable future — say, at least five

years — rather than trying to time short-term peaks and valleys.

With cryptocurrency, Morrison says, the importance of patience is even higher. The volatility is more extreme, but the long-term gains have been quite appealing.

If you invested \$1,000 in bitcoin on the day of the original HODL post, it would be worth almost \$63,000 in early 2022. But there are countless people who have lost money trading bitcoin in the meantime, buying it when it was high and bailing out after a disappointing fall.

Many long-term HODLers take the examples of successful gains as a validation of a strategy that at times can border on zealotry. In online forums devoted to cryptocurrency, users can be shunned for liquidating part of their holdings even after significant long-term gains.

"There is nothing wrong with locking your profits," one user on Reddit's CryptoCurrency message board lamented recently. "Don't let anyone make you feel bad about it. Even if you lock your profits at 50%, you are still 50% up."

AN ARTICLE OF FAITH

Associated Press

The devotion among HODLers comes from the culture surrounding bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, says David Duong, head of institutional research at the cryptocurrency exchange Coinbase. For some, cryptocurrency represents a vision of economic change that is bigger than themselves.

One of the distinguishing features of so-called blockchain technologies such as cryptocurrencies is that they could theoretically be used to create "decentralized" products and services free from the costs and controls imposed by authorities such as bankers and regulators.

"The people who are in the space very much have a belief about the transformative nature of the technology itself," Duong says.

YOUR DECISION: IS HODL FOR YOU?

You don't have to be a cryptocurrency disciple to learn something from the HODLers. If you believe in the value of your investments, you might be less likely to panic in the face of market turmoil.

A good strategy, Morrison says, is to have a strong idea of why you're investing in something when you buy it. And when you're tempted to sell it, a key question is whether something about your analysis has changed. □

Harvesters of valuable baby eels hope for a stable 2022

By **PATRICK WHITTLE**
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — The industry that harvests one of the most valuable fish species in the United States is hoping for a more stable year in 2022 after two years of volatile price swings. Fishermen in Maine harvest baby eels, called elvers. The elvers are sometimes worth more than \$2,000 per pound because they are vitally important for Asian aquaculture companies. Maine is the only U.S. state with a significant fishery for the eels. Prices have

fluctuated wildly since the start of COVID-19 pandemic. They sank to \$525 per pound in 2020 and rose to about \$1,850 last year.

This year's season begins March 22 amid another cloud of uncertainty. The season is always dependent on weather conditions and the timing of rivers thawing, because that allows the eels to run and be fished with nets. Unrest in Europe also has the ability to disrupt the international supply chain for seafood, said Darrell Young, co-director of the Maine Elver

Fishermen Association.

The price of the elvers rebounded last year in part because of greater ease in international trading at large during the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The eels themselves also cooperated. Maine's fishermen are limited to a little less than 10,000 pounds (4,535 kilos) of baby eels per year, and they have reached or approached that number for several years in a row. The fishing industry ends for the season in early June or when the



Baby eels swim in a tank after being caught in the Penobscot River in Brewer, Maine, on May 15, 2021.

Associated Press

quota is tapped out. The eels get sold to Asian aquaculture companies that use them as seed stock so they can be raised to

maturity and used as food. They are used in Japanese dishes, and some return to the United States for use in sushi restaurants. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Antlered animal
- 5 Kick off
- 10 Flaring star
- 11 Painter's place
- 12 N. Mex. neighbor
- 13 Sentence ender, of a sort
- 14 Rebate
- 16 It's behind home plate
- 20 Earlier
- 23 Flamenco cry
- 24 Be real
- 25 Boat's load
- 27 Pulled off
- 28 Buckeye
- 29 Journey break
- 32 Catch up with and pass
- 36 Changing room fixture
- 39 Region
- 40 Set straight
- 41 Wee bites
- 42 Fruit basket items
- 43 Designer Spade

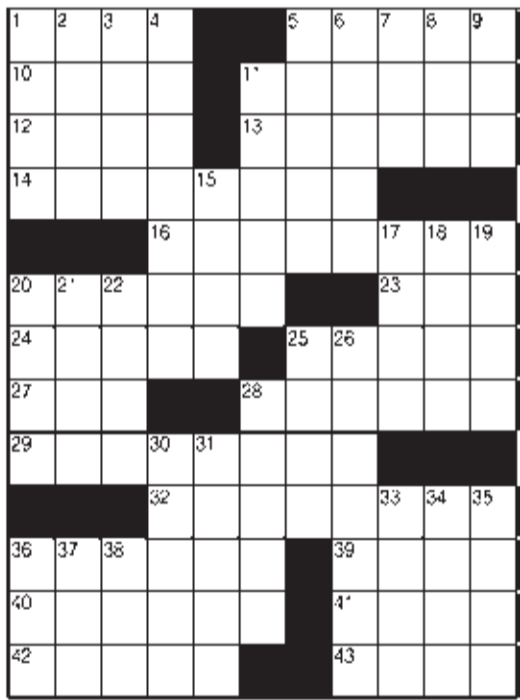
DOWN

- 1 Unseen problem
- 2 Singer Amos
- 3 Tel —
- 4 Garden pavilions
- 5 Pancake order
- 6 Ankara natives
- 7 Say further
- 8 Carnival city
- 9 Great weight
- 11 Word separator
- 15 Homer's son
- 17 Matador's foe



Yesterday's answer

- 18 Gymnast Korbut
- 19 Lowly worker
- 20 Hotel units
- 21 Way to go
- 22 Rover's pal
- 25 "Believe" singer
- 26 Scuba need
- 28 Plain to see
- 30 Game of hands
- 31 Pizzeria sights
- 33 Sills song
- 34 Retained
- 35 Comfort
- 36 Cut short
- 37 Lode material
- 38 Snoop grp.



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3-10

CRYPTOQUOTE

CWTD P J ADMO NQWLZ CDFFOQ

EQWX LDFIJZN LJCA CAO

CQOOV. — IDQFO LJFVWZ

HDIOQ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE COFFEE, I'D HAVE NO IDENTIFIABLE PERSONALITY WHATSOEVER. — DAVID LETTERMAN

U.S. officials reverse course on pesticide's harm to wildlife

By MATTHEW BROWN
Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — U.S. wildlife officials reversed their previous finding that a widely used and highly toxic pesticide could jeopardize dozens of plants and animals with extinction, after receiving pledges from chemical manufacturers that they will change product labels for malathion so that it's used more carefully by gardeners, farmers and other consumers. Federal rules for malathion are under review in response to longstanding concerns that the pesticide used on mosquitoes, grasshoppers and other insects also kills many rare plants and animals. A draft finding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service last April said malathion could threaten 78 imperiled species with extinction and cause lesser harm to many more.

Wildlife officials reversed their position on the 78 species in a Feb. 28 biological opinion following talks among malathion manufacturers, officials from the wildlife service and the Environmental Protection Agency, according to documents reviewed by The Associated Press.

Wildlife service officials now say malathion could cause limited harm to hundreds of species, but is unlikely to jeopardize any of them with extinction as long as labels that dictate its use are changed. Their conclusion depends on farmers, gardeners and other consumers abiding by the instructions on where and when to use the pesticide. Environmentalists who wanted more restrictions on malathion said the

proposed label changes would do little to protect species that in some cases have dwindled to very few individuals. They said assuming malathion users will follow the guidelines is unrealistic, and objected to an 18-month timeline for the EPA to put them into effect.

"This is an enormous punt," said Brett Hartl with the Center for Biological Diversity. "There's not a single endangered species that will see anything change on the ground because of this biological opinion for at least 18 months, but probably never."

The manufacturers agreed to use labels that provide extensive guidelines on when and where malathion should be used to avoid killing wildlife. For example, the labels would say not to spray malathion to kill mosquitoes during the middle of the day, when bees and some other insects are more active and thus more likely to be inadvertently killed.

Gary Frazer, the wildlife service's assistant director for ecological services, said the measures would "significantly reduce many of the effects of malathion use." The manufacturers were largely represented by FMC Corp., a Philadelphia-based agricultural chemical company, according to the wildlife service. FMC spokesperson Lars Weborg said the proposed labels and other updates to malathion guidelines "were developed using a standard procedure common to any industry."

He said the company couldn't speculate if less malathion would be used as a result.

The species that were found in jeopardy last year included birds such as the Mississippi sandhill crane and various fish, insects, snails and other animals and plants.

U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Raul Grijalva criticized the Biden administration for not taking stronger steps to protect endangered species from pesticides. The Arizona Democrat said "theoretical restrictions" on the use of malathion would not help. □

Classifieds

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Puberty runs amok in Pixar's 'Turning Red'



This image released by Disney+ shows Mei Lee, voiced by Rosalie Chiang in a scene from "Turning Red."

By **JAKE COYLE**
AP Film Writer

For better and worse, "Turning Red" is like no Pixar film before it.

The film, directed by Domee Shi, who made the lovely Oscar-winning short "Bao," is the first Pixar movie directly solely by a woman. Its leadership team, including producers and art departments, is entirely female. And its protagonist, 13-year-old Meilin Lee (voiced by Rosalie Chiang), is a Chinese-Canadian eighth-grader in the throes of puberty.

For Pixar, a factory of childhood whimsy designed to make adults cry, "Turning Red" fills in more than a few blind spots. Not only is the movie deeply rooted in a female and Asian-North American perspective, it wades into a chapter of life unfrequented by Pixar. This is the first film by the studio in which, for example, a sanitary pad is offered. And it's the first — history take note — to feature twerking. The best thing about "Turning Red" is how it broadens the horizons of the 36-year-old animation powerhouse with a refreshing vantage point and some new moves. If some of Pixar's greatest movies have used high concepts to illustrate existential quandaries, "Turning Red" (which like the previous two Pixar releases is streaming only; it debuts Friday on Disney+) is one of the studio's most specifically drawn films.

Set in Toronto in 2002, Mei is

a high-achieving, straight-A student — in an introductory montage, a teacher describes her as "a very enterprising, mildly annoying young lady" — with a solid, supportive group of friends: Miriam (Ava Morse), Abby (Hyein Park) and Priya (Maitreyi Ramakrishnan). But possibly the most dominant relationship in Mei's life is with her mother (Sandra Oh). She's a domineering but loving parent whose high standards for her daughter have somewhat stifled the anxious Mei. She keeps certain feelings — like the onset of hard-to-control urges, particularly when it comes to a popular boy band named 4-Town — hidden from her mother. "I do make my own moves," Mei says. "It's just that some of my moves are also hers." But it's getting harder to keep some of those feelings inside for Mei. Her mother finds a notebook under her bed with swooning drawings of 4-Town, and immediately irrationally blames an older teen boy for being a bad influence. Then one morning, Mei awakens to find the transformation that's been occurring within her has manifested itself: She turns into a big, fluffy red panda — and a walking metaphor for menstruation and other developments of young womanhood.

That "Turning Red" pivots this way — with Mei, as panda, cowering in the bathroom with her mother knocking outside — is a

fairly radical move in the typically sanitized world of studio animation. But Shi, a longtime animator at Pixar, has never been one to shy away from a dramatic plot device. Her "Bao" conceived a mother-son tale in a dumpling-comes-alive allegory that culminated, surprisingly, with the mom eating her dumpling son in a fit of denial over him growing up and leaving home.

The Lees live in one of the oldest Chinese temples in Toronto, and that setting is just one way "Turning Red" plays with balancing cultural assimilation with preservation. Mei soon discovers that panda alter-egos run in the family. Her mother, and their other female relatives, have known the same struggles with expression and repression. (Some similar themes about not holding in your feelings were brought more vividly to life another recent Disney hit, "Encanto.")

Where I think "Turning Red" mainly misses is with the mom. The movie is structured for her to be the primary foil and friend of Mei, but her character isn't much more than an assortment of Asian tiger mom tropes. That leaves little to propel "Turning Red" other than the inevitable empowerment of Mei. There are delights along the way: a rooftop skip through Toronto, with a dose of wuxia magic; the rich, lovable design of Mei's Totoro-sized panda; the close-knit companionship of her friends.

Associated Press

Tony Awards to return to regular date and place



By **MARK KENNEDY** AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In another sign that show business is snapping back to its pre-pandemic rhythm, the Tony Awards will once again take place in June and at a familiar location, Radio City Music Hall.

The Broadway League and the American Theatre Wing announced Wednesday that the awards will be handed out June 12 and aired on CBS, but instead of a three-hour presentation, producers are adding an extra hour ahead of the telecast that will stream only on Paramount+. The broadcast will be live across the country, starting at 7 p.m. ET (4 p.m. PT), and the main event will be live at 8 p.m. ET (5 p.m. PT).

There was no word on a host.

The ceremony will be held nine months after "Moulin Rouge! The Musical" took the best new musical crown at the last Tony Awards, one postponed because of the pandemic. That show was also expanded from its typical three hours to four, with host Audra McDonald handing out Tonys for the first two hours and Leslie Odom Jr. hosting a "Broadway's Back!" celebration for the second half with performances from the three top musicals.

The Tony Awards eligibility cut-off date for the 2021-2022 season is April 28 for all Broadway productions which meet all other eligibility requirements. Nominations for the 2022 Tony Awards will be announced May 3. □

But "Turning Red" is surprisingly free of humor or the kind of visual wit that has long been a Pixar hallmark. It could be that, if we're talking about representing hard-to-tame adolescent urges in monster form, "Turning Red" — bold as it may be — can't come close to matching the messy comic farce of "Big Mouth," the far less family-friendly but much more true-to-life animated series that paired seventh graders with lascivious "hormone monsters." It isn't easy — or maybe even possible — to do puberty

justice with a PG rating. But "Turning Red" does nail one rite of female adolescence with remarkable accuracy: the boy band. With radio-ready pop tunes by Billie Eilish and Finneas (who voices one of the singers), 4-Town is about as pitch perfect as an NSNYC knockoff can be. But just as good is Mei's mother's cutting critique of them as "glittery delinquents with their ... gyrations." I seriously doubt I will ever listen to my daughters blast BTS without muttering her line to myself. □

Union makes counteroffer on 98th day of lockout

By RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Negotiators for locked-out players made their latest counteroffer to Major League Baseball on Wednesday after Commissioner Rob Manfred let pass his deadline to reach a deal preserving a 162-game season.

The sides negotiated on and off for 16 1/2 hours until 3 a.m. Wednesday morning, then broke for the union to hold a morning conference call with its executive board.

Union chief negotiator Bruce Meyer and general counsel Ian Penny then walked three blocks through a wintry mix of rain and snow to deliver the proposal to MLB's office, then headed back to the union headquarters.

On the 98th day of the lockout, MLB said no additional games had been canceled and talks will continue.

MLB made moves Tuesday toward players on the key economic issues of the luxury tax, the amount of a new bonus pool for pre-arbitration-eligible players and minimum salaries. The league also pushed for its long-held goal of an inter-

national amateur draft. Teams would rotate picking in different quadrants of the first round over a four-year period, and a slotting system would be installed similar to what the union agreed to starting in 2012 for the amateur draft covering residents of the U.S., Puerto Rico and Canada. The international draft proposal includes hard slots that could not be negotiated by individuals. MLB estimates \$17 million in additional spending for the drafted international players above the \$166.3 million spent by the 30 teams in 2021, plus an additional \$6 million on non-drafted players. The draft would start in 2024.

The union's long steadfast opposition to an international draft remains an obstacle to an agreement, and MLB has tied it to dropping direct amateur draft-pick compensation for qualified free agents.

International players would lose the right to pick which team they sign with. The age for the draft would be in the year a player turns 16.

The deadline Tuesday was the third set by MLB in the past two weeks.



Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred speaks during a news conference after negotiations with the players' association toward a labor deal, Tuesday, March 1, 2022, at Roger Dean Stadium in Jupiter, Fla.

Associated Press

Manfred originally set a Feb. 28 deadline for preserving opening day on March 31. After 16 1/2 hours of bargaining in Jupiter, Florida, that began Feb. 28 and ended at 2:30 a.m. the following morning produced progress, Manfred extended that deadline to 5 p.m. the following day.

Talks broke down, and Manfred announced the first two series for each team during the season had been canceled. Negotiators returned to New York and resumed bargaining on Sunday.

While it appears there is

no chance opening day could take place as originally scheduled, MLB told the union that Tuesday was the last possible day to reach an agreement that would allow a modified 162-game schedule, along with full salary and service time needed to reach free agency for players.

MLB on Tuesday offered a tax threshold starting at \$230 million and rising to \$242 million, a person familiar with the proposal said, confirming a move first reported by The Athletic. The person, speaking to The Associated Press on condi-

tion of anonymity because no public statements were authorized, said management's proposal contained tougher penalties at a higher payroll level than in the expired agreement.

The union began the week at \$238 million for this year, rising to \$263 million in 2026. The union entered Monday asking for an \$80 million bonus pool for this year and MLB upped its offer on Tuesday from \$30 million to \$40 million. MLB offered a \$700,000 minimum salary for this year and the union asked for \$725,000.



Miami Dolphins head coach Brian Flores talks to the media before an NFL football practice at Baptist Health Training Complex in Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Fla., Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021.

Associated Press

By The Associated Press

Brian Flores wants the NFL to reject the Miami Dolphins' request for an arbitration hearing regarding his class-action lawsuit against the team and the

Brian Flores wants lawsuit against NFL heard in court

league alleging racist hiring practices.

Flores' lawyer sent a letter to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell on Wednesday, urging him to turn down Miami's request and have the case settled in court.

"Arbitration is not transparent," attorney Douglas H. Wigdor wrote in his letter. "Indeed, arbitration is by its very nature a secretive process that takes place behind closed doors and outside of the public eye. The lack of transparency in arbitration only serves to continue the status quo—which in this case, is one that you have conceded must be fairly evaluated and potentially overhauled. That cannot happen in arbitration. In addition to being

secret and confidential, it is a well-accepted fact that arbitration presents a barrier to justice for victims of discrimination and other misconduct."

Flores, hired as a senior defensive assistant for the Pittsburgh Steelers last month, filed his lawsuit against the NFL, Dolphins, New York Giants and Denver Broncos following his dismissal by Miami. Flores led the Dolphins to consecutive winning seasons before he was fired in January.

"The claims that we filed involve important issues of systemic race discrimination and the integrity of NFL football games," Flores said in a statement provided by his lawyer. "Unfortunately, the Dolphins and their at-

torneys, Quinn Emanuel and Paul Weiss, are trying to push the claims against the Dolphins into secret arbitration proceedings that lack transparency. There are currently ongoing legislative efforts to end forced arbitration for claims of race discrimination, which I fully support. I would hope that the NFL and Dolphins would also support those efforts. Commissioner Goodell now has a choice to make. Will he allow this case and future race discrimination claims to play out in a transparent and public legal process, or continue along the same unacceptable path?"

Flores' lawsuit alleges the league has discriminated against him and other

Black coaches for racial reasons, denying them positions as head coaches, offensive and defensive coordinators and quarterbacks coaches, as well as general managers. Flores also claims Miami offered him \$100,000 per loss during his first season with the team in 2019 in an effort to receive a top draft pick.

The NFL has maintained the lawsuit is "without merit," although Goodell said before the Super Bowl that "all of the allegations, whether they were based on racism or discrimination or the integrity of our game, all of those to me were very disturbing."

The Dolphins requested the arbitration hearing last month. □

A big purse and a big mystery at The Players Championship

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Justin Thomas

walked into the locker room at the TPC Sawgrass just like has done for the last seven years, with one interruption in his routine.

His memory told him to peel off to the right. Then he remembered one of the perks from winning The Players Championship last year, and he went left into the small locker area reserved only for champions. "A nice adjustment that I'll be able to make going forward," he said.

There are other perks this year, starting with the direct deposit into players' accounts at the end of the week. The premier event of the strongest tour in golf now offers the richest purse at \$20 million, with \$3.6 million going to the winner.

The top three places pay out seven figures. Someone can finish out of the top 10 and still make more than \$500,000.

What hasn't changed is the fickle nature of The Players Championship. The TPC Sawgrass, whether it's held in March or May, is known not to favor any one particular style of game, whether it's power like Thomas, Tiger Woods or Rory McIlroy, or



Justin Thomas tees off on the 15th hole during the final round of the Genesis Invitational golf tournament at Riviera Country Club, Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022, in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles.

precision like Matt Kuchar or Webb Simpson.

"You look at the winners, and it's crazy," Thomas said. "It's truly a place that I don't think it favors one shot shape. ... It's just whoever decides to go out and get it the best that week."

Thomas has one piece of history to overcome. No one has won back-to-back in The Players Championship, whether it was held at Atlanta Country Club or Colonial, across the street at wind-whipped Sawgrass Country Club or the Stadium Course, where it has been held for the last 40 years.

Woods and Sergio Garcia went from a runner-up fin-

ish to victory the following year, and that's about as close as it gets.

Thomas took the advice of Alabama coach Nick Saban in approaching the week. He's not defending anything just because he won.

"I'm just going to go try to win it again," he said.

Different about this week is that players might actually carry an umbrella. In a most unusual start to the year, the PGA Tour has not had any round in four states across five time zones interrupted by weather.

Storms are in the forecast for later in the week, with a cold front due on the weekend.

Associated Press

The variety has come in the scoring. There were complaints that scoring was too low on the West Coast Swing.

And then Bay Hill was too hard, with only 10 players finishing under par.

McIlroy was among those who thought the Arnold Palmer Invitational might have gone a little bit over the edge with its greens so yellow and bare that putts were gliding more than rolling. He said it made him feel as though he was playing worse than he was.

Maybe his comments after the round came in the heat of the moment.

Or not.

"It wasn't misconstrued," McIlroy said. "I was definitely complaining. Look, it was the same for everyone — I certainly get that. But there was a lot of alcoholic beverages being drunk in the locker room when I went in there on Sunday afternoon by a lot of the players, so it wasn't just me out there having a rough time."

The TPC Sawgrass can rough players up in a different way, firm or soft, calm or windy. There's water in play over the final eight holes, including more water than land on the infamous island green for the par-3 17th.

McIlroy missed the cut one

year, won the next, and his next time he missed the cut again. Maybe that explains why no one has repeated as champion. Or maybe it's as simple, as Thomas says, that the field is stronger than any other from top to bottom.

Missing this year is Bryson DeChambeau with hand and hip injuries he says are still not at full strength. Harris English is recovering from hip surgery. Kevin Na's wife is expecting their third child. Phil Mickelson remains on hiatus.

That still leaves 46 of the top 50 in the world. And while it's not considered a major championship, it's becoming no less important to the players.

Collin Morikawa kept hearing it was a big deal when he was growing up, but at the time, the landscape of golf to him started with the four majors.

"But since I've turned pro, I've viewed it very differently, and I appreciate everything that's put into this tournament because it is amazing," Morikawa said.

"The scope, the landscape of everything out here when we show up, it's all for us — it's all for the PGA Tour players. And that's why you want to win this tournament." □



Five-time winner Dallas Seavey takes his sled dog team through a snowstorm in downtown Anchorage, Alaska, on Saturday, March 5, 2022, during the ceremonial start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

By **MARK THIESSEN**

Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska

(AP) — Dallas Seavey was leading the Iditarod early Wednesday, in his quest to become the race's greatest champion.

Seavey was the first musher to leave the ghost town of Ophir as mushers continue to jockey for position in the early part of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, and lead changes are common.

Ophir is 352 miles (566 kilometers) into the nearly 1,000-mile (1,609-kilometer) race. Seavey left there at 3:49 a.m. Wednesday with 12 dogs in harness. He had an 18-minute lead over the second-place

Associated Press

Iditarod leader Seavey is first to leave ghost town of Ophir

musher, Brent Sass, who has 13 dogs remaining on his team.

Sass, the race's 2012 Rookie of the Year, is looking for his first Iditarod title.

A musher must start the race with at least 12 dogs but no more than 14. Race rules require at least five dogs be on the team at the finish line. Seavey, the defending champion, is tied with Rick Swenson with the most Iditarod titles, at five apiece. Swenson won his fifth title in 1991, and the now-71-year-old musher last ran the Iditarod in 2012. Seavey earlier told

The Associated Press that win or lose, he will likely take a break from the race after this year to spend time with his daughter.

Musher Aaron Burneister picked up some homemade Alaska swag Wednesday when he was the first musher to reach McGrath, the checkpoint right before Ophir.

The prizes, made by McGrath residents, included a pair of musher mitts made of beaver fur and beaded moose hide by Loretta Maillelle and a beaver fur musher hat sewn by Lucy Miller. □